

# THE ASYLUM

*Quarterly Journal of the Numismatic Bibliomania Society*

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Volume XVI, No. 2

Spring, 1998

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“Books, dear books,  
Have been, and are my comforts, morn and night,  
Adversity, prosperity, at home,  
Abroad, health, sickness,—good or ill report,  
The same firm friends; the same refreshments rich,  
And sources of consolation.”

*William Dodd ~ 1729-1777*



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**N. B. S. Membership:** \$15.00 annual dues in North America, \$20.00 elsewhere. Members receive all issues of the current volume. Requests for membership should be submitted to the Secretary-Treasurer.

## *President's Message*

My prior "President's Messages" have been filled with positive, upbeat news about our hobby and club. While great things are happening within NBS which I'll get to shortly, it is probably appropriate to start with the sad news; the death of Ken Lowe. Ken Lowe's sudden and unexpected passing was a shock to bibliophiles across the country. I received numerous phone calls and e-mails from concerned NBS members. As most bibliophiles know, Ken was a partner in The Money Tree; auctioneers of numismatic literature. My personal relationship with Ken extends back to 1984 when I responded to an ad in *Coin World* seeking consignors for The Money Tree's first mail bid sale. My initial consignment started a long-term relationship with The Money Tree resulting in several consignments to their first ten sales. Ken should be given credit and recognized as being committed to providing extensive auction lot catalog descriptions and as a writer. A gregarious man, Ken was always willing to discuss the "current news of the day" in numismatics. It was rare for a phone conversation between Ken and me to last less than an hour as he was always brimming with intriguing hobby information. Ken Lowe will be missed by the numismatic literature fraternity. Best wishes to Darryl and Myron Xenos who have suffered the loss of a dear friend.

### LOOK AHEAD TO PORTLAND!

NBS will be holding a combination club meeting and educational forum at the Portland ANA Convention. The meeting will be held on Friday, August 7th, from 7:00 to 8:30 PM. We are still seeking speakers. If you have a topic to discuss, even for just 15 minutes, please contact Michael Sullivan.

### NBS WRITER'S AWARD BALLOT

Inserted with this issue of *The Asylum* is the first NBS Writer's Award Ballot. Please take the time to complete the ballot and return it prior to the deadline. Your vote counts! The award recipient will be announced at the NBS meetings during the ANA Convention in Portland. The ballot process is simple; just pick your three favorite articles from volume 15 and check the boxes. Ballots should be returned to Dave Hirt, Secretary-Treasurer.

See You in Portland!

## *Membership Report*

NBS welcomes six new members: John Brew, Robert Cochran, Richard G. Dockter, Samuel Warshauer, Christopher Welch and Wendell Wolka. Sadly, three longtime members have died in recent months: Harry W. Bass, Jr., Kenneth M. Lowe and Raymond H. Williamson.

Harry Wesley Bass, Junior  
A Tribute to a Great Numismatist  
By Ed Deane

Harry Bass was one of the most interesting, remarkable, unique and complex individuals I have ever known.

Extraordinary in his own varied life, he touched others in many different walks of life. People upon first meeting him personally were sometimes surprised by his booming voice, his quick and subtle wit, and his wide range of interests and expertise in so many of them. He had a very direct manner in dealing with things, and then letting you know when he was done with that subject, and moving on to something else. Everyone who knew Harry personally will have their own stories of their experiences with him; he was not a man you soon forget. I only knew him the last eight years of his life, but in his employ I did have the opportunity to work with him on a daily basis in working on the projects of the Harry Bass Research Foundation during that time. And I want to give tribute to what I came to know of the man, as during those years we became "the best of friends."

Harry had a very high personal moral code. He was what I would call a "Boy Scout" – he was exceedingly honest, forthright, principled and personally loyal. He held himself to the same high standards of all those he had working with him.

He was exceedingly honest, not only in his sense of right and wrong, but also in his desire to "call a spade a spade" – he did not like "sugar-coated" things, or the use of euphemisms – he much preferred the plain unvarnished truth, warts and all.

He was intensely loyal to those people, causes and ideas that he cared about; he was never "luke-warm" in his judgments. When he considered, deliberated and then embarked on a project, he had already taken into account all that could go wrong as well as right. And once begun, he continued to press forward in spite of any obstacle that might present itself. The unexpected problems that were always appearing over the horizon to complicate matters of progress never discouraged or defeated him – the difficulties only made him more determined to work things through, to seek out and expeditiously bring about the solution.

Leadership went with many of the roles he played throughout his life; he took it in stride, and made the tough executive decisions he needed to make. Harry never shied away from the proper use of power, though he



was always careful to use it judiciously. As an executive and a decision-maker, he always wanted to have ALL the facts before him, so he often waited until the last strategic moment before making the required decision. He knew the “buck stopped here.” And once he made his decision, there was no second-guessing its correctness – he had clearly in mind all his reasons for his choice, and he was willing to back it up.

He was a careful guardian and good manager of all that he had been blessed with in life – his time, energies, financial resources, intellect, and his creative genius. Because of his failing health in later years, he knew he didn’t have forever to get things done. So he managed to keep very focused on those things that mattered greatly to him.

Harry had a unique sense of history and of his own place in it. More than almost anyone I know, he possessed the ability to relate to and interact with the Past, Present and Future, all at the same time.

He loved the Past; he felt that people could learn much from the past – much that they miss in today’s transient and hurried life style. He had a great appreciation for old things and their quality of workmanship, whether of mind or muscle. And he collected things from the past – from oriental rugs, knives, and objects of art, rare books to numismatics. He loved the interesting and unusual. He wanted whatever he collected to be the most complete, the best collection that could be done, in order to build “world-class” reference collections, whatever the area of interest.

But more than just loving and collecting them, he wanted to know about them – ALL about them. And so beyond his formal education, he taught himself throughout his lifetime – he educated himself about all sorts of things, and so became recognized as an authority in several fields.

Harry loved books; he had “numismatic bibliomania” in the worst way. He was forever looking for the newest, the oldest, the most obscure, the most controversial ... books of every form and description. Though I computerized a database of over 10,000 numismatic books, pamphlets and catalogs before he died, I have yet to complete the full database project, because he had probably another 5,000-6,000 books (some rare or ancient, some not) on other subjects which I have yet to get to. In addition to numismatics, he had a particular interest in the Civil War period, and the early 20th century, the classics, Greek and Roman history, contemporary culture, politics, and the list goes on and on. Harry was a voracious reader, and often “consumed” two or three books in a night (as well as three daily newspapers, weekly and monthly magazines, etc.). When others were sleeping, he was often reading or working at the computer as a result of his reading.

Harry's dream for his library collection (as in all other areas) was to build a "reference library" concerning those things he had a particular interest in. He wanted to assemble in his own home the most complete library available, with the best from the past and present. But more than just collect it, he wanted the information – the knowledge, the insight and judgment in his head that this information could bring. .

Harry was always very much in touch with the present, and with his many investments and business dealings, and he examined them daily, both in their broadest scope and in their smallest detail. But business interests alone were not enough to occupy all of his creative energies.

He had a voracious appetite for new information; he subscribed to numerous magazines, three daily papers, and constantly read books on a wide variety of interests. There were no bounds to his intellectual inquiry, for he was equally adapt at seeing the "big picture" and the "smallest detail."

He loved words and the many nuances of the English language. He always kept a dictionary at arm's length, even when he was on oxygen in a hospital bed at home. He was bored by all but the most difficult crossword puzzles in the New York Times. He loved to discuss the meaning and nuances of words, and whether he was using the correct word in just the right way. And the rules for punctuation, grammar and such – he would critique and edit most of the things he received from others, always highlighting things with his famous "pink pen" highlighter. You always knew what Harry had been reading, because more than half of the information was now highlighted in pink!

Harry had a Passion for life, and he wanted to live it to the fullest. You could see it in his many interests through the decades of his life: his leadership in Republican Politics, his athletic interests (he was an avid golfer, hunter, and skier in his younger days), and his many trips around the globe, and his wide variety of business interests through the years.

He found many ways to engage his ever-inquisitive mind, and his insatiable quest for knowledge. He would often work through the night because he was engrossed and swept up in some project he was working on. At regional computer shows, he would be 20-30 years the senior of most others there but that never slowed him down from asking questions and finding out what he wanted to know.

He was very task oriented – from one day to the next most of the time, he would totally revise my plans for the new day's work. I would go ready to pursue yesterday's project; yet halfway expecting he would have a new and different plan for the day, having been up through the night "noodling" new alternatives.

Harry was passionate about the future. In his lifetime he set in motion a number of projects that stretch well into the next century, long after he knew that he would be gone from this earth. But he believed in them so much that he made sure that they would come to pass by concept, organization and funding, even if he would not personally get to see them to their completion.

The creation of the Harry Bass Research Foundation was part of this dream, to make it possible for future generations to study and enjoy the fruits of his labors, and to share his numismatic work around the world through its publication on the Internet.

He determined several years ago that he would leave a lasting legacy to the world of numismatics, and the Internet World Wide Web would provide the vehicle to share that wealth of information, not only of his own work and study on his U. S. Federal gold coin collection, but through his continuing relationship with the American Numismatic Society, to cooperate in making their vast resources available. That dream is rapidly becoming a reality.

Harry was a Renaissance man. In the sense of "rebirth," "revival." He saw things in a new way, and he was continually giving birth to new, cutting-edge ideas.

He had his own timeline. It mattered not whether it matched anyone else's sense of timing or not. It was almost as if he had a sixth sense about the time that he had left to accomplish things of importance to him. He carefully measured and monitored his own energies, resources and support and gave fully to the task at hand.

He loved a challenge, particularly if it had never been done before. It could not be too big or too complex, if he deemed it worthwhile. He chose to put his considerable energies, financial resources and personal efforts into carefully chosen projects where he could make a decisive difference, not only for his own lifetime, but to succeeding generations.

Harry had been fascinated with computers for two decades, having worked with them to organize his own collections in database form as soon as they were commercially available in the early 1980s. As computers became more powerful, his vision of their potential empowered his own work in numismatics. In December of 1991 he created the Harry Bass Research Foundation (HBRF) to hold together in perpetuity his reference collection of U. S. Federal Gold coinage, which he had perfected over 30 plus years, and to make it available in the future for numismatic study and research. As the Internet emerged in the last few years, he envisioned sharing his



collection with numismatists around the world via the World Wide Web. Although he had already placed over 800 items of gold coins, patterns and U. S. Large currency in the Research Foundation since 1991, upon his death the remainder of his large collection has also become part of the HBRF holdings. He envisioned all of these thousands of items not only described, but also pictured on the Web, for numismatists everywhere. (And this will happen as soon as we can complete a project of this magnitude, which may be several years).

In addition to the concept of his own reference collection, Harry wanted to encompass ALL numismatic information to be "Internet-available," if not in "full-text" version (an impossible task, between its scope and copyright restrictions), then at least in "searchable-index" version. To this end, he first set out to create an index of significant numismatic periodicals over the last 100 plus years, which the Research Foundation calls "NIP" for "Numismatic Indexes Project", and currently includes over 76,000 entries in a searchable listing of fifteen of the important numismatic periodicals published in English since the Civil War. Though we can't provide full text of these periodicals, this for the first time ever does allow collectors and numismatists to know what has been written in the last century about their particular interests.

Broadening that concept to an international numismatic level, Harry then launched (and personally paid for) "Phase Two" – to electronically index the complete text of "Numismatic Literature," which the American Numismatic Society has published for the last fifty plus years (since 1947) of all numismatic publications around the world, with full text citations and abstracts (in most cases). The sheer volume of this series in semi-annual bound issues made it very difficult to find the resources, even when you knew that something had to be written on a particular numismatic subject.

Though not yet finished, (a project of scanning, correcting and mounting 139 issues of some 600 pages in each issue), under the sponsorship of HBRF, we hope to complete this entry of "NumLit" and presentation on the Web about the turn of the new century. Our work is being posted as each issue is completed, and currently more than the last decade (as well as some of the early years) is currently available to search at <http://search.hbrf.org/resmenu.htm>.

Harry was 10-20 years ahead of his time. For the last several years he was constantly thinking and visioning about the 21st century, seeing the possibilities in just-emerging technologies and ideas. The dissemination of

information by computers on the World Wide Web fascinated him, and he wanted to utilize the potential of the Web for numismatic education, since this new avenue had never before been possible on a worldwide scale.

As one of the ex-presidents of the American Numismatic Society in New York City, though he could no longer travel, he still remained on their Council until his death to provide his leadership input by conference phone hookup.

One of his dreams for the ANS was to "reconceive the ANS for the next century," giving the whole world access to its treasure of resources via the Internet and in touch with members and curators through email. He not only conceived it and convinced the Council of its wisdom and validity, but also supplied the hardware, the software, the manpower and the funding to make it happen.

Almost single-handedly, Harry has provided the host site for the ANS Internet presence, and created the Web interface for the presentation and search capability of the ANS databases of the ANS Coin Cabinet, representing over a half-million coin entries, for the world to benefit by.

His latest effort was the conceiving, planning and execution (and paying for) the ANS Library Project: having the entire card catalog of the ANS Library entered into electronic form for the first time ever. Until now, there was no way for persons around the world to know everything that had been written on a given numismatic subject. Later this year (probably by September) the entire ANS Library card file of some 140,000 entries will be electronically available for searching via the Internet. He believed deeply in having this information available for numismatists everywhere "from this time forth;" in fact, he was examining the "first returns" of the card input on Friday, April 3, in his hospital bed the day before he died. And he was giving instructions to the last, having trained me to carry on his wishes after he was gone. He was a faithful steward of all that was entrusted to him.

And so his dreams and life's work will be carried forward into the coming century through the Harry Bass Research Foundation, which is dedicated to serving numismatics around the world in the years to come. In this one man's lifetime, he has been able to envision and bring together all of the significant resources of numismatic study and research of centuries, as well as to create a world class U. S. Federal Gold reference collection for study and research, for the benefit of all numismatists everywhere from this time forward. He will be remembered as one of the great numismatists of this century. As I said in the beginning, Harry Bass was truly a remarkable man; I am honored to also have called him my friend.

Harry W. Bass, Jr.: A Remembrance  
By Francis D. Campbell, Librarian  
American Numismatic Society

When Harry W. Bass, Jr. first visited the American Numismatic Society in 1966, little did I know what an influence he was to have on my career at the Society and on me personally. At the time, Geoffrey H. North was the Society's Librarian and I was his assistant. Harry took an immediate interest in the Library, revealing his personal love of numismatic literature. Before long, Harry's name was appearing in Geoff North's annual reports, wherein he was acknowledged for his generous support of the library's binding program. I can still recall Harry's concern for some 33 manuscript volumes of the Edgar H. Adams "Notebooks," which he arranged to have specially bound in 1967. His support of the binding program continued through the 1960s and into the 1970s. In 1968, Harry became a member of the Standing Committee on the Library. He would later (1980) become Chairman of the committee, a position which he held until his passing. As Assistant Librarian my direct involvement with Harry was somewhat limited. However, during his visits to the Society he always made it a point to chat briefly with all staff members, showing a true interest in their work.

In 1970, while I was still attending library school, I was fortunate enough to win an award which offered an all-expenses paid trip to the American Library Association Convention, which that year happened to be held in Dallas. As soon as Harry heard I was heading his way, he extended a warm invitation to visit his home and inspect his library. He called his library the "Sanctum Sanctorum," and it was quite a treat for a then young librarian to be given a personal tour by Harry himself. The year following my trip to Dallas, Harry established the Bass Library Fund, the income from which has been used ever since for library acquisitions. While not the library's only restricted fund, it has become - owing to Harry's subsequent contributions to principal - the major library fund. During the same year, Harry funded the renovation of what had been a library workroom, turning it into a presentable reading area with adjustable steel shelving around its perimeter. Since that time, this room has been called the "Bass Room," and has housed our growing collection of non-numismatic periodicals.

In 1975, upon Geoffrey North's retirement, I became Librarian of the Society. In January of that year, prior to my official assumption of duties, Harry wrote to me expressing his confidence in me and indicating he would be available to provide "whatever assistance" he might in the years that lie ahead. When I review the events that have transpired since receiving that



letter, I can say without hesitation that Harry Bass was a man of his word. In the years prior to 1978, when he became the Society's president, he had placed the library on sound financial footing. After he assumed the presidency, he seemed to focus more on enhancing the quality of library operations by funding expansion of computerization to include library applications, and providing for improvements in the library's physical plant. In 1983, through the Harry Bass Foundation, he funded the initial software development for a library ordering, accessioning, and cataloging system. He also funded the installation of moveable shelving in the West Room of the Library. With this installation, the library was able to segregate rare materials, removing them from the open stacks, and thereby securing them.

When Harry relinquished the presidency of the Society in 1984, he seemed to begin a new phase in his support of the library. Still a member of the Society's governing Council, he now focussed more on building the library's endowment, funding purchase of rare materials, and the completion of library computerization. During the latter half of the 1980s and into the 1990s, the Harry Bass Foundation made substantial contributions to the library's endowment. In 1990, Harry began his support of special acquisitions with a sizable donation toward the purchase of items from the John W. Adams library. This acquisition included manuscript inventories of collections and research notes, but consisted mainly of original correspondence among the principal authorities on United States Large Cents who, during the first half of this century, established many of the die varieties and pedigrees accepted today. The names represented were Howard Newcomb, George H. Clapp, William H. Sheldon, Homer K. Downing, and Henry Clay Hines. At the George Kolbe sale of December 8, 1991, Harry, along with several other donors, contributed to the purchase of the New Netherlands Coin Company Archives. Founded in 1936 by Moritz Wormser, this firm came under the directorship of Moritz' son, Charles Wormser, in 1946. During the period 1951-1970, John J. Ford assumed full editorial responsibility for New Netherlands' catalogues and from 1952 until 1960, Walter Breen contributed his cataloging skills to the firm. Coins sold by the firm came from the best collections, which included the Norweb, Brand, Eliasberg, Boyd, Gibbs, and Downing collections.

Beginning in November, 1994, the firm of Bowers and Merena commenced the auction of the legendary Armand Champa library, which was sold at four separate sales, the last occurring in November of 1995. I knew about some of the rarities to be offered and also knew that attempting to purchase only one or two would considerably deplete my library budget. Harry knew this as well, so he called me prior to the first sale and once again offered to help, pointing out that these sales would offer items which appear "once in a lifetime." Through Harry's generosity, many of these



items are now in the American Numismatic Society library. To mention just a few, the library acquired Raphael Prosper Thian's "Register of issues of Confederate States Treasury Notes," the personal diary of Joseph J. Mickley, the confidential black list of Philadelphia coin dealer, Henry Chapman, correspondence of George F. Kunz for the period 1892-1932, several manuscripts by Walter Breen, and a number of rare counterfeit detectors and auction catalogs. The last library purchase to which Harry lent his direct support was from the Charles Davis auction of March 22, 1997, which included a number of Henry Chapman's bid books. Of the thirteen quarto sized sales offered by Davis, ten were acquired by our library.

Over the past several years, despite the fact that he was very much involved with projects initiated by the Harry Bass Research Foundation and despite the fact that his health was failing, Harry still spent a good deal of time supporting computerization of the ANS library's operations. Thanks to his Foundation, the Society now had its own web page. However, he wanted to make available the library's holdings on the web, as he had done for much of the coin collection. In the months prior to his death, he made provision for this and, indeed, was able to see some initial results of our card catalog conversion project. I spoke with him for the last time a week before he passed away and found his indomitable spirit very much intact. He was a true rarity, the kind of person everyone should be fortunate enough to know at some point in their lives. I had that good fortune and I will truly miss the friendship and counsel of this extraordinary individual.

• • •

## Ken Kowe: Amateur of Numismatic Literature

By Joel J. Orosz, NLG

The twentieth century has not been kind to the enthusiast. Professionals rule the roost; those who moonlight are dismissed as "mere amateurs." But "amateur" has not always meant "non-professional." Its root is the Latin "amator," meaning "lover." If ever in the history of numismatic literature there was an "amateur" in the strict sense of the term, it was Ken Lowe, who suddenly passed away this past February.

Ken was an English teacher by vocation, but his passionate avocation was anything printed about coins and paper money. When one reads the first half-dozen or so of the catalogs that he wrote for The Money Tree (a

partnership between Ken and Myron Xenos), or any of the numbers of their house organ, *Out on a Limb*, his love of the literature virtually bubbles off the pages. Puns proliferate, one-liners line up, and always the cataloger gently mocks himself.

The enthusiasm could sometimes flirt with transcending conventional standards; occasionally a customer, after imbibing in the pure joy of a Ken Lowe description, found himself the owner of some item of literature that he didn't really need, at a price higher than he might otherwise have been willing to pay. Yet nearly all forgave Ken everything, for his enthusiasm was as contagious as it was bulletproof.

Only Ken Lowe would take the time to annotate every lot in a sale of eight or nine hundred items. Only Ken Lowe would wax rhapsodic about the merits of obscure monographs or commonplace periodicals. Only Ken Lowe would write three single-spaced pages about a single day spent at an ANA convention, in the process finding something complimentary to say about scores of collectors he met on the bourse floor. Only a true amateur would do such things.

It was all too easy to judge Ken as a sort of ardent swain of numismatic literature, all heart and no head. It was true that there were more profound students of the art, whose knowledge came from deeper wells. Anyone who ever had a serious conversation on the subject with brother Lowe, however, discovered that he possessed a broad-ranging and thoroughgoing knowledge of the literature of numismatics. He was also an authority on some of the related aspects of the hobby. For example, Ken was a pioneer in collecting storecards published by coin dealers, which is now becoming recognized as a natural adjunct to the hobby of collecting the literature.

Ken Lowe leaves many legacies. No one in the annals of our hobby has felt the sheer joy of it as deeply as he did, and perhaps as a result, no one worked harder than he to recruit and educate new collectors. Ken dispensed kind words and welcoming attitudes freely; he never met a stranger in his hobby. Nor did Ken ever dwell on slights, or nurse a grudge. If he had enemies, he kept his enmities to himself. And above all, he radiated boundless enthusiasm for numismatic literature.

It is one of life's sad ironies that Ken had just retired a few months before his passing. He had always had energy in pursuit of his hobby; now he had time, and Ken was in his element. How sad that he was allotted so short a span in this happy state. Perhaps, however, we should take a figurative leaf from Ken's book, and look at the positive side of this unhappy event. Ken's ardor for numismatic literature burned undimmed to the very end; he will always be the consummate amateur of our hobby.

## A Friend I Barely Knew

By Harold Welch

February 23, 1998. I sit before my keyboard half dazed. I have only learned of Ken Lowe's sudden death within the hour. It's a gray melancholy Monday in Minneapolis and I thought I would swing by Remy Bourne's to pick up Dean (my son) and my auction catalogs for Remy's upcoming sale. Perhaps I would peruse a few of the lots and chat with Remy a little; that always brightens my day.

Remy's phone was busy. After he got off one call, he joked "That was a heavy hitter!" I replied that I was quite certain that was what he always says as he gets off the phone with me. Remy checked his voice mail to see if any other calls had come in while he was on the phone. "See, there's another one!" Remy seemed to be enjoying the steady flow of activity and the interaction with friends and customers (usually one and the same). As Remy returned the call, I entertained myself by examining a couple of the auction lots. With my nose buried in a book, I heard Remy say, "I think I'm going to cry." Not looking up, and thinking he had just lost a consignor or a big bid or something of the sort, I replied with a lighthearted "Uh-Oh!" As Remy left the room, I realized he was in fact crying.

I waited a few minutes in respect for his privacy, but then went to my friend to see if I could be of assistance. Remy looked up at me and said, "Ken Lowe has died." I heard his words clearly, but my mind couldn't immediately make sense of it — I had to have misunderstood. I had only recently spoken with Ken on the telephone. He had told me he was coming for Remy's auction. I looked stupidly at Remy and said: "What? Who?" Remy repeated himself and I could pretend to not understand no longer. I remember swearing under my breath: "Damn it! DAMN IT!" We had but a few minutes to discuss our shock and grief before the calls began to come in. I excused myself and headed home.

As I drove, I tried to figure it out. I hadn't really known Ken that well. We had met in person only three of four times. Yet even upon our first meeting I felt he was a friend. Collecting numismatic literature isn't only about gathering old dusty books, it's about the people you meet and the friends you make. It's about understanding the twinkle in his eye and the excitement in his voice as Ken showed me a return envelope from some old-time coin dealer, something that most people would be hard-pressed to give a polite "Oh that's nice." Shared interests and a common desire to learn just a little bit more can build friendship quickly.



Ken told me that he had an old book on British tokens (my specialty) and if I would simply let him know what it was, he would be glad to send it to me with his compliments. He wasn't worried that it might be valuable, he just wanted to know what it might be and thought I might enjoy it. When the package arrived, it contained the book in question and a copy of Bower's *Adventures with Rare Coins* as a gift for my son ("Enclosed with my compliments is a book for Dean. Pretty neat stuff in it. Maybe he'll let Dad read it, especially John Ford's Introduction."). Down in the corner was a special limited edition numbered copy of the 1997 50th anniversary *Red Book* ("I had to enclose something to fill out the box."). The token book turned out to be a truly charming little volume that had been put together from parts of *The Virtuoso's Companion* and other early works, along with numerous handmade rubbings and annotations. I will always cherish it.

Ken closed by saying, "I enjoyed getting to spend some time with Dean and you at Remy's sale. Minneapolis may have cold weather, but it sure produces good people with warm hearts." In his most recent issue of *Out on a Limb*, Ken noted the people in attendance, very kindly mentioning Dean and myself: "Harold Welch [writer/researcher par excellence of Conder Tokens, a fine generous gentleman whom I don't get to see often enough], Dean Welch (an enthusiastic young numismatist, a fine young man)." How could I not come to feel friendship and affection – even in the short time that I knew him – for a guy like that?

Ken was so bright, so knowledgeable. It seemed he knew every story and tale regarding numismatics and he told them with relish. He had a boyish grin and a twinkle in his eye. That is how I will always remember him. I had wanted very much to build a long-term friendship with Ken. He was someone I admired and respected and I always enjoyed his company. I agree with you, Ken, I didn't get to see you often enough.

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## NBS Meeting: Cincinnati ANA Mid-Winter Convention March 20, 1998

Over 25 people attended the NBS Club meeting held during the ANA Mid-Winter Convention in Cincinnati, Friday, March 20th. The meeting commenced with current club news. Myron Xenos then expressed his sincere appreciation for the cards, letters, and phone calls received on behalf



of Ken Lowe. Myron has forwarded all correspondence to Ken's family. If you would still like to send your condolences, please feel free to write to Myron Xenos, c/o The Money Tree, 1260 Smith Court, Rocky River, Ohio 44116 or fax to 216-333-4463.

The featured speaker for the meeting was Gabrielle Fox, noted book binder and conservationist. Ms. Fox specializes in top quality conservation work (paper restoration and binding restoration) and high quality binding (new leather bindings, rebinding, original miniature book bindings, clamshell boxes, etc.). Ms. Fox's presentation included several wonderful anecdotes. For example, she told of a family who had a rare heirloom volume chewed apart by its beloved household canine. The dog's jaws were so strong that the paper became "welded together" at the chew marks. With the patience bestowed upon only a few people, Ms. Fox carefully removed one leaf at a time until the book was completely disassembled, repaired each page, and rebound the book. This care, attention to detail, and patience are key attributes to Ms. Fox's contribution to the world of book binding.

Of particular interest was a book Ms. Fox worked on years ago which was still in pieces for display and training purposes. The book-in-process illustrated the process for sewing bindings, adding silk headbands, adding spine bands, attaching end papers, and how the leather cover is prepared. Leather covers must be pared thin by hand to create thick and thin spots in the leather corresponding to folds, glue joints, and strength requirements.

While Ms. Fox will undertake most book binding work, she most enjoys conservation work, binding repairs, and creating unique leather bindings. A number of exquisite photographs of her prior work were shown at the meeting. Ms. Fox also displayed a number of rare numismatic literature items from the Michael Sullivan library, previously repaired or in the process of restoration. Anyone interested in contacting Ms. Fox to consider commissioning work may telephone her at Duttenhofer's Books & News, 513-381-1340 or by mail: Gabrielle Fox, PO Box 8977, Cincinnati, Ohio 45208. You will be most impressed with the quality of her work, the turnaround time, and her service.

Meeting Attendees Included Nawana Britenriker, John Burns, Judy Cochrane, Norman Cochrane, David Davis, Ray Ellenbogen, John Eshbach, George Fitzgerald, Mark Ferguson, Dan Hamelberg, Dee Homren, Charlie Horning, Wayne Homren, Brad Karoleff, David Sklow, Sherry Sklow, Victoria Stone (*Coin World* Reporter), Michael Sullivan, Bill Swoger, David Thomas, John Wilson, Nancy Wilson, Wendell Wolka, Daryl Xenos, and Myron Xenos.

## Some Random Numismatic Reminiscences - Part 1

### Randolph Zander

*Editor's Note: Universally admired and respected, Ran Zander for many years was one of the most important foreign coin dealers in the United States of America. His specialty was Russian numismatics and, since retirement, he has ably edited the Journal of the Russian Numismatic Society – often almost single-handedly filling its pages with delightfully-written numismatic articles containing important information never before published in English. The following reminiscences, dealing in large part with well-known American coin dealers and collectors from the 1920s on, first appeared there and are published here with minor changes.*

History, as written down, is too often the dry hulk of events and scenes with all the succulence drained out. Ninety percent of today's common knowledge evaporates within a generation or two as the witnesses die out. This is all the truer of a discipline like numismatics than, say, a talkative ambient like a literary movement, for most of the time we coin people are among the most laconic or the laziest.

Official historians may try their best, but they struggle too often within the limits of over-dainty propriety. The splendid ANS centenary volume – one of the best – is thus shackled. Take, on the other hand, the late Stuart Mosher – he knew everybody, he had grasp, he was observant and trenchant without being petty or vindictive, and after listening to his fluent monologue with a couple of drinks under his skin, you'd agree that, with a minimum of editing, he would have been an ideal answer to the oral historian's prayer.<sup>1</sup>

Good work is going on. Some of the *Asylum's* authors have distilled much living history out of the often quite abundant contemporary records of events. *Geldgeschichtliche Nachrichten's* detailed sketches of great numismatists are admirable. John Ford in 1957 put together a memorable note on the just deceased Wayte Raymond. John Adams' biographical sketches in his two books on U. S. Numismatic Literature are of decided value. Two hundred-odd years of still not fully plumbed correspondence files of the Hermitage, a century's worth of those of the State Historical Museum, and the intact files of certain Russian numismatic families are yielding good "three-dimensional" material. Somebody with a tape recorder was enterprising enough to sit down next to centenarian Eduard Gans and let him talk.

The following pages are offered as an extremely modest contribution. I have not been a specially keen observer. The main merit of what I have to say is that I have been looking on, after my absent-minded fashion, for a very long time, and a melange of what I can call up doubtless contains some otherwise overlooked or half-forgotten fragments. I have spent most

of the time on events and personalities of the 1960s and before, on the principle that these are likely the least intimately known today. I may have made too free with names now largely out of sight; I apologize to those to whom these are beyond the horizon; the thought was that there is still a fair public of readers with memories going back that far who might enjoy the gossip.

I beg the reader's indulgence for the first person singular that occurs so often in these notes. More often than not I had a part in what's being spoken of, and willy-nilly can't excise myself. It is too bad that sometimes I cannot give dates or other details precisely. Except for the Russians, my books and papers are gone.



Thomas L. Elder came from Western Pennsylvania to New York around the turn of the century. In the city he soon became a prominent "coin and curio" dealer and auctioneer until his retirement in 1938. He was a tall, straight-standing, lanky man, and even in later life he had the wild mesmerizing eye you see in pictures of John C. Calhoun and many Confederate soldiers of Scotch-Irish descent. Like them, he held strong views and shared them unabashed. He early compelled the attention of the numismatic public; he waded as a principal into the 1909 A. N. A. presidential election controversy between the Higgins versus the Henderson crowds, crossing swords with the redoubtable Farran Zerbe. The affair almost wrecked the A. N. A. He struck the Brian Boru and the Lief Erickson dollars, he put out an argumentative monthly coin magazine, and he soon was racking up good success with his auctions, of which in the end he held almost 300, including quite a few that stand as classics. He auctioned a surprising number of useful reference books and occasionally some philatelic items.

Tom Elder used to call talers thaylers, he had other quirks, and he enjoyed being known as the fastest cataloger in the business. He was far from careless, though: his Skilton<sup>2</sup> catalogue of 1925, for example, with hundreds of rare Hispanic proclamation pieces, is a model of careful scholarship. And he did all his own work – in those days it would have been faintly disreputable to depend on a hired gun for one's cataloguing.

I owe him a lot as my unwitting early numismatic guide. Before the late 20s coins were for me a desultory interest – looking for Indian cents and the occasional liberty-seated quarter and using the J. W. Scott catalogue to classify coins a travelling aunt sometimes sent. Around 1928 I bought an 1841 dollar from an Elder ad for \$1.50, read about his sales, wrote for a catalogue and took the de Camp bus from Montclair one Saturday to go to my first auction. I had about \$10.00 discretionary money on me, so the



overhead – two 50¢ bus fares and an 8¢ malted on Sixth Avenue – at the cheapest would run me over 10%.

Elder didn't make an orderly numismatist out of me, it was simply that he broadened the perspective spectacularly. His average auction was a wild pot pourri – many choice items way above me, even unappreciated by me, together with a varied fare of every sort of inexpensive temptation and of large lots. For a kid, in the face of such bounty, how could one think of planning, foresight or "investment"? It was all targets of opportunity and impulse bidding – auction fever on a two-bit scale. You could find various Latin American duros, some with good mintmarks, in nice shape for 35¢ – just a trifle over bullion. I once bought a lot of three proof quarters of the 1880s for 30¢ each – they were heavily tarnished, then a fatal disadvantage, nowadays cause for breathless lyrics<sup>3</sup>.

Elder's office was in a dingy building at 8 West 37th Street, a block east of New York's fur-bearing and garment district. On auction morning he and his slaveys laid out all the individual coins on top of their envelopes on tables and displayed the big lots wherever there was room, often on the floor to the side. Bidders circulated freely, handled the merchandise, occasionally bounced a coin off the concrete floor, but remarkably rarely switched coins or otherwise abused Elder's trust. Then everybody trooped upstairs to a vacant loft where the sale was cried with great speed in what soon became a dense fog of cheap cigar smoke. Elder was always ready with a pungent word – one star customer, for example, was an upstate dirt farmer who came dressed as if straight from forking the manure heap, nonetheless he had money and impeccable taste and bought nothing but the best. Elder could be depended on to growl in a stage whisper, "pearls before swine." At the other end, there was John Zug – the well known dealer's dealer, up on the local train from his somber big house on the hill in Bowie, Maryland, dapper in high starched collar, holding his pencil raised as he whistled his bids through his store teeth. He won a good proportion of the top U. S. material – items like a Stella for \$120-odd.<sup>4</sup> During one period, Tom Elder showed his rare obsequious side to a brat a little younger than me, Wolfson by name and a wildly uninhibited bidder with precocious taste (I've wondered if he might have been the same Wolfson whose important collection Stack's many years later auctioned).

My passion for Russian (specially copper) coins took serious form only after I began studying the language at school and took Professor Geroid Tanquary Robinson's (so help me!) celebrated course in Russian history, cutting off around Witte's day. After that I bought from Elder sales a fair number of groups of Petrine coppers and large piataks – a big bang for the buck. I had little chance at high-grade Russian coins – Alex von Sandro and Izzy Snyderman<sup>5</sup> monopolized such pieces, and in any case I couldn't have afforded them.



After retiring reluctantly, Thomas Elder tried halfheartedly a few mail-bid sales from home, then lived somewhat at sixes and sevens for another 10 years, into 1948, at home in Westchester in summer and in South Carolina in winter. He couldn't shake his bronchial trouble, though he smoked noxious medicated cigarettes on the promise of relief. One saw him around, selling off stock at various dealers's, as much for companionship as for the money.

Decades later Ben Douglas of Washington and I drove up to see Paul Seitz, the Pennsylvania Dutch dealer, on his home turf. He had bought the leftovers of the Elder stock a good while before. Ben brought home thousands of broken bank notes and I, finding no foreign material and thus a bored and easy mark, fell for a great mass of small cut semi-precious gemstones I knew nothing about – one element of Elder's Coin and Curio business that justified the "curio" part of the title.



Henry Chapman died in Philadelphia in 1936. The closest I ever came to him was occasionally when I got to an Elder auction. I remember the old man with his tobacco-stained patriarchal beard in 1933, just after gold coins had been recalled and demonetized, cackling over his proposition that if you swallowed a ten-dollar gold piece it would not be illegal to pass it.

The family held on to his secretary-understudy of many years, Miss Wright, and she genteelly kept the business afloat on a much reduced scale, in the familiar second-story back chamber in the house's ell. One reached it through a side door on South 15th Street through which Enrico Caruso in his day and scores of other numismatic eminences had often passed. On the room's side next to the main house was the walk-in vault John Story Jenks had presented to Chapman at the 1921 auction of his remarkable collection. Miss Wright was not eager to sell too much too soon and be left without a job. However, many persistent buyers were able to make a good thing of it, H. D. Gibbs from Pittsburgh especially, for Miss Wright never tampered with Henry Chapman's old prices. The rumor was that some visitors tilted the odds still further in their favor by switching coin tickets.

In the late 1930s I worked for the old Kellett Autogiro firm in South Philadelphia, not far from Hog Island, and every now and then I looked in on the historic 15th Street premises and passed the time of day with its guardian. Some found her forbidding, I thought she seemed to show a wistful charm. My buying power was very modest, even for those days' prices. I remember an uncirculated Louis XIV boy-head ecu, my most ambitious buy, which cost me five dollars. Why it never occurred to me to ask about Russian coins still mystifies me. As I later learned there were a good many in stock.



In the late 30s I ran across a hole-in-the-wall dealer on Arch Street, Philadelphia, near the old Reading Station, Bill Rabin by name. In the corner stood a shabby steamer trunk, which turned out to be half full of British tradesmen's halfpenny tokens and the other half Russian coppers, all neatly sorted and folded up in brown-paper rolls, as was custom in those days.

Bill was eager to sell me the trunkload for \$100 – at a guess maybe 3½ cents apiece. But that was three week's pay, so I inexpertly cherry picked some of the rolls and left it at that. Half a dozen years later, while I was on leave I had occasion to run downtown and I looked in on Bill out of curiosity – he was a little more grizzled, and he was still sitting on the Russian half of the trunkful.<sup>6</sup>



In the summer of 1945 I was enroute from the Levant to Washington via London. There were a few numismatic hours free. Seaby's, whom I knew, weren't of help with Russian copper – then my monomania – but they told me where to find A. H. Baldwin & Sons, whom till then I had not known. Albert Baldwin and his cousin Douglas Mitchell were manning the large reception room in the once elegant Adams house at 4 Robert Street, much of which the Firm occupied. They showed me a sizable box with Russian coppers no longer in their trays but jumbled together under a heavy layer of recent dust and slivers of glass – disorder the result of a near miss by a buzz-bomb a few months before.<sup>7</sup>

Albert Baldwin saw me on my way with a good selection I had picked from the copper box along with the loan of the Firm's copies of Giel & Ilyin and Ilyin & Tolstoi, which I photostated when I got home. It was typical of the man. His thoughtful kindnesses and his numismatic civic virtue, masked by a sometimes acerbic presence, were with him a matter of noblesse oblige. Major museums and a wide circle of serious numismatists are much in his debt.

In the course of about 25 years it became ever more evident that he was the Firm's key man, perceptive customers sought him out, though his Uncle Fred remained very positively the *de jure* head and hoarded the big-name accounts like the Norwebs and Lockett. Albert, seriously and progressively diabetic, carried a great, largely self-imposed responsibility and a workload that would have done in a robust man. Used up and gravely ill, he died in his mid-50s.

Albert's nephew Peter Mitchell, a great-grandson of the founder A. H. Baldwin, whom Albert and Peter's father Douglas<sup>8</sup> had trained, moved

forward in the crisis; it became immediately evident that Baldwins were uninterruptedly in firm and competent hands.

It is not generally realized that A. H. Baldwin & Sons, founded in 1872, is the longest active numismatic firm in the hands of a single family, a fifth-generation Baldwin having come aboard some 15 years ago. Some other names claim the greater longevity but are not now headed by descendants of the founder.

For 30 years, until I retired from the coin business in 1975, I traded with the Baldwins, and we are still in touch. It was a central fact of my numismatic life. I bought infinitely more than I sold, but occasionally I came up with an item for them like a Dorrien & Magins shilling. In my day the Firm had undoubtedly as large and varied a stock as any active dealer. From their reserve they doled me out staples they knew would be of use, often in great quantity, like native Indian rupees, communion tokens,<sup>9</sup> Papal medals, tradesmen's halfpennies (often BU),<sup>10</sup> coin weights and even 19th century decent U. S. coins in quantity. Through them I bid regularly in Glens and other London sales, then a major source for the U. S. dealer in foreign coins.<sup>11</sup> Baldwins catalogued for Christie's the GM Russian gold sale in 1950. They sent me catalogues – I canvassed U. S. collectors of Russian coins and medals and relayed back consolidated U. S. bids, a modest percentage of which were successful.



In his brief career David Bullowa, who was about my age, quickly established himself as one of our top dealers and students and, in his day, by all odds America's most erudite numismatic bibliophile. His brief years gave him little time to write much, but his auction catalogues were memorable. Before WWII he was for a time with the New Netherlands firm, in their cozy lower Fifth Avenue roost, catty-corner from Rudolph Kohler's long narrow upstairs coin office<sup>12</sup>.

As an NCO in Italy during the war, Dave made important local numismatic friendships and bought innumerable books and coins. He regularly sent all these things home through the APO addressed to the ANS, begging the Society to keep whatever it needed. Dave developed an abiding and refined taste for Italian cooking, and always took a leisurely lunch at an Italian place near his shop. Dave's death in 1953 at the age of 41 was a major numismatic and personal tragedy.

A few years before, he had taken over Ira Reed's numismatic premises in Philadelphia, on South 18th Street just below Market. He and Ed Rice, a New Jersey speculator, had bought out the still substantial remainder of the Chapman stock when Miss Wright at last retired. There were present untouched odds and ends from Chapman's memorable Jenks sale of 1921.



David asked me to look over the Russian material, one highlight of which turned out to be half a hundred proof coppers from the mid-19th century on. They didn't come cheap, Dave wanted 50 cents apiece across the board!

Not long after David Bullowa's long regretted death, Cathy Bullowa told me she had wholesaled to Dan Brown in Denver a considerable part of the firm's stock. Henry Grunthal took a heavy load of foreign medals off her hands around then. This was before Cathy decided to set up Coinhunter – her own coin business, now one of the oldest still healthily active. Dan proved amenable to turning a large part of the foreign element over to me. Most of it I sold through lists, but a few coins tempted me, including some Russian items Dave had overlooked when he showed me the Russian material among what he had bought from Miss Wright.



Serge Glad, an emigre Russian naval officer and medal collector, tipped me off sometime in 1947 to an ad in the New York *Ново Русское Слово* (known as the Hobo News) from a Madam Mintzlova in Venezuela who offered to sell a collection of Russian gold coins. It turned out to be a fine group of some 125 pieces that had belonged to her late husband, a well-known feuilletoniste in Riga between the wars. The widow's maiden name was Bodisko – an ancient Ukranian family. The gold was the most portable part of Mintzlov's large collection. The silver and copper – the bulky elements – had been hurriedly buried on the way west in a Berlin sector that soon afterward came under Soviet control.

Madam Mintzlova undertook to send the gold coins in three installments, and I obtained a ruling beforehand from the Customs Bureau that these were admissible (Mr. Dull, the appropriately named Customs Agent in the somnolent Alexandria port, whose main traffic was newsprint and petroleum, had said he would confiscate them). Two installments came through, then Madam Mintzlova died. Neither her brother nor daughter, at daggers' points, would trust the other to send the third lot, so they carried it together to a Caracas jeweler; the odds are ten to one that he then dropped this group, which included an almost complete run of proof 20th century Russian gold, into the crucible.

A traveler later gave Madam Mintzlova's daughter a pouch with a couple of hundred mordovkas and half a dozen coppers, including a dubious 180\_piatak – all that could be spirited away from the Mintzlova Berlin deposit. I turned the mordovkas over to Emmett Peake, a rather advanced Rochester Russian specialist, who just then had stopped by to introduce himself. Thirty-five years later he joined our new RNS, and that is all I ever got to know about this enigmatic colleague.





Jan Ignatiewicz Bekisz, a lamed WWI veteran, practiced law in Vilna during the years between the wars. He was an accomplished numismatist and had the resources to support his hobby on a generous scale. When the Soviet overran Poland in 1939, he found a precarious sanctuary as numismatic curator at his home town museum. Five years later, as the Germans retreated westward, Bekisz, with his wife and daughter joined the massive exodus of civilians fleeing from the Soviet advance. Loading essential belongings in a pushcart, for a good deal of the way they trudged to Hamburg. Included in the baggage were Bekisz's Russian silver and copper coins (his gold and rich taler series had been confiscated) along with a few basic numismatic references.

From Hamburg, in the British-occupied zone, the family made their way to London, spent a few lean years there, and ended in Australia in Hurlstone Park, a suburb of Sydney. As soon as the war was over, Jan Bekisz put himself in touch with some of the scattered emigre numismatists, and it was through their introduction that he and I were steadily in contact till he died some 20 years later.

Bekisz in exile kept up his numismatic studies, and in 1960 and 1966 he published in 50-copy editions two important collections of articles – *Numizmaticheskiye Zapiski* – mostly his own work. Sadly, my lent-out copy of the first issue has gone astray but the second, with 121 pages, includes among others a discussion of the inscriptions on silver bars, a note on two unpublished coins of Vladimir Olgerdovich, Shukhaevsky's exposition on the background of the Putilov-Sevsk chekh episode – one of the best until Valentin Ryabtsevich's recent standard work on the subject, a useful Russian numismatic bibliography for 1930-1965, and Arefiev's stern review of Severin's silver book. Jan Ignatiewicz was responsible not only for the substance of his compendiums but for all the boring logistical details as well. Try making 50 perfect pencil pressings one after the other of the same medal in high relief. Then make 50 x 7 pressings for seven other coins and medals. And put together the 50 semi-hard covers and bind the contents firmly into them. Talk about a labor of love!

Bekisz (who later half-anglicized his name to Bekish) sold me his copper coins while he was still in London, the silver collection followed in the late 1950s, and I was very grateful to his widow for letting me take over the library which he had largely reconstituted. Each of these elements reflected the discriminating work of a very judicious and fully informed collector. The high point of the copper group was the 1796 cipher pattern grivennik with floreated "E" (Br 33, Elmen 1504 @ \$3800). It was successively a show piece of my collection, and those of William Schirmer and Bernhard Brekke.

From the silver series the most notable piece was a copper trial strike of the 1807 ruble. Bekisz reported finding it in a copper odds and ends box; he soon enough identified it. Severin 2575 and "Duplicates" 1931 No. 278 @ Mk 350, not knowing of the Bekisz specimen, both claimed it as unique. The coin would have been struck in June 1807 by James Duncan, of the Boulton team at the St. Petersburg Mint, as he was making final adjustments for the first run of business strikes from the newly installed Soho presses that began on the 20th of that month – a coin of capital importance. Memory fails as to the disposition of this piece; it shames me to say that in spite of Jan Ignatiewicz's clear emphasis at the time the coin impressed me less than it should have.

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Stuart Mosher, a down east bluenose, worked professionally for Wayte Raymond for some years. After time out for a bout with TB and a pneumothorax, he ventured back to work, this time for New Netherlands. Then, as editor of *The Numismatist* he recuperated in McAllen, Texas, until he was called to the Smithsonian as curator of coins around 1950. He held the two jobs concurrently till his death three years later. He did his best, at some risk to himself, to mediate the dispute involving Frank Katzen and the ANA establishment.

<sup>2</sup> In 1982, acting for Numismatics International, I arranged for the reprinting of the Skilton catalogue.

<sup>3</sup> There were the Kossuth notes of 1852 in uncut sheets, just as they were unloaded by the unpaid printer after Kossuth's government had collapsed – one, two and five florins, beautiful engraving by Tappan, Casilear and forgotten partner, the firm that printed our first postage stamps. I bought a thousand unsigned sheets of each for \$1.50 per thousand. When I had wrestled the load home, all I could think of was to cut up a few sheets, sign the notes "Kossuth" in India ink and use them as play money.

<sup>4</sup> John Zug's daughter, Frances Ann (Mrs. John Clothier Stokes) displayed the firm authority common to many petite women along with her father's cool business sense. She became an accomplished antiquarian, conducting a semi-private trade in Baltimore, handling only high class objects. During WWII, as a Red Cross volunteer in Boston, she traded a quantity of the firm's numismatic stock with Percy Rideout, a well-known general collector/dealer, against a rug collection. Many years later I bought most of her meager foreign remnants, along with some rare Hawaiian patterns. Abe Kosoff eventually took over her choice U. S. material.

<sup>5</sup> Isodore Snyderman kept an elegant store on 57th Street at Fifth Avenue, where he specialized in Russian antiquities and objets de vertu. He was later a major source when Sol Kaplan, acting for Willis duPont, was gathering material in an effort to reconstitute for the Smithsonian Institution the missing gold element of the silver and copper GM collection which he had recently donated to the Museum.

<sup>6</sup> The episode underlines the truth that except for U. S. and Canadian coins, Russian copper was one of the few series some Americans then went to the trouble of collecting by date and

mintmark. And with other big accumulations I've run across, it reinforces the indication of just how plentiful these coins were (for that matter, think of the tens of thousands of piataks that swamped the market as recently as a couple of years ago). One reason so many survived is that at one time they were worth more intrinsically than their face value. People actually buried hoards of them.

<sup>7</sup> The foresighted Baldwins fared better than Spink's, who suffered grievous stock attrition when such a bomb had struck their building. Baldwins had prudently entrusted their best material for safe-keeping to old customers spotted around the countryside.

<sup>8</sup> Douglas Mitchell had entered the Baldwin establishment in 1924. His tenure – over 60 years – fell not far short of the length of Queen Victoria's reign. For that matter, the original A. H. Baldwin spent just as long “on active duty.”

<sup>9</sup> Not all the communion tokens ended in numismatic channels. O. K. Rumble, a Texas collector and a devoted Presbyterian layman, had numbers of the commoner ones sealed in plastic, and given out, one per graduate, to newly minted clergymen who came out of a Texas seminary.

<sup>10</sup> The BU halfpennies had survived the London fog and other vicissitudes unchanged in their brown paper wrapping for a century and a half. The first batch I solicitously put into sulfur-free envelopes. Within six months their pristine tone began to fade. So much for over-solicitude.

<sup>11</sup> The large lots of odds and ends, that in those sales habitually finished up most offerings of older collections, contained many choice pieces which in later days merited separate listing and even plating.

<sup>12</sup> So far as I know, Kohler was the first coin dealer in New York to install a bank-like security partition with heavy plate glass. This came after his aide Ed May had shot a holdup man dead. Ed died two or three years ago in California, a highly respected exonomist.

*to be continued...*

## The First Photographically Illustrated Auction Catalogue by George F. Kolbe

Most American numismatic bibliophiles know that the first photographically illustrated U. S. coin auction is Ed. Cogan's June 23 & 24, 1869 sale of the Mortimer McKenzie collection. The first photographically illustrated auction catalogue of any kind is widely believed to be Christie, Manson & Woods' 1860 sale of works of art and vertu, being the private collection of the Lowenstein brothers of Frankfurt am Main and known as the “Vienna Museum.” It contained 36 photographs on salted paper by Hermann Emden of Frankfurt, one of which was handcolored.



## Researching a Story by William A. Burd

Writing a successful article depends on the quality of your research. Everything you need to know is out there; you simply need to piece it together.

When I began my article on the 1894-S Dime (later published in the February 1994 *Numismatist*), I found no information on the Superintendent of the Mint at San Francisco for 1894 beyond the *Coin World Almanac* listing, under Superintendents of the Mints, of "J. Daggett."

After much research, beginning with his daughter Hallie, I was able to piece together the life of John Daggett. One discovery led to another: from his being Lt. Governor; to the town of Daggett being named after him; to his involvement with the 1892 Columbian Exposition in Chicago; to his childhood home in Newark, New York. All of the information was obtained from local sources, including the Clerk's Office of Daggett, California, the Historical Society of Newark, New York, the State Library of California, and a dozen others.

Occasionally, information received is useful on more than one project. It happened to me while working on the Dime story. Another project involved Wells Fargo & Company and, while gathering data on cofounder Henry Wells, I discovered his wife's maiden name was Sarah Daggett. This immediately caught my attention and, after a great deal of correspondence, a link to John Daggett was made.

Sarah Daggett was born May 18, 1803 in Aurora, New York. Her father, Levi was the brother of John Daggett's grandfather. Sarah married Henry Wells on September 5, 1827 and had four children. One child died in infancy and the remaining three spent their early years in Palmyra, New York. They were likely childhood friends with John Daggett as they were cousins and lived only ten miles apart.

In 1844 Sarah's husband founded Wells & Company, an express service between Buffalo and Detroit. Service rapidly expanded to Chicago, Cincinnati and St. Louis. In 1846 he sold his interest in the western business and moved to New York to handle the eastern business. In 1850 he organized Wells Fargo & Company to handle express business to California. In that same year, John Daggett arrived in California.

Although John never worked for Wells Fargo, his life was certainly influenced by the family connection with Henry Wells. In 1884 his youngest daughter was born and he named her Leslie Wells Daggett. This connection does not seem to be of great historical significance. However, if another writer in the future does research on an article, for example, on "The



Political Influence of Wells Fargo on 19th Century America" it might become more meaningful.

History is recorded through a multitude of diverse mediums, from fossils in lava beds to manuscripts in world-renowned libraries. Somewhere in-between there are those seemingly unromantic and less than exciting bits of history found in small rural libraries, local genealogy clubs, historical societies, and cemeteries. Investigating these sources and compiling the information obtained will generally give you the basis for a well-written article containing new findings that will be of interest to your audience.

• • •

New: NBS Internet Web Site  
[http://www.money.org/club\\_nbs.html](http://www.money.org/club_nbs.html)

The Numismatic Bibliomania Society (NBS) now has a presence on the Internet. Developed by Vice President Wayne Homren with the assistance and support of the NBS Board of Governors, the new web site is a clearinghouse for information about the Society.

Computer space for the site is provided by the American Numismatic Association (ANA); the address is [http://www.money.org/club\\_nbs.html](http://www.money.org/club_nbs.html).

The site highlights the goals, history, and activities of the organization, founded in 1980 to support and promote the use and collecting of numismatic literature. Members and other interested parties will find information on the history of the organization, current and future activities, as well as society publications and awards.

Selected articles from the society's journal, *The Asylum*, are also available on the site, as well as selected numismatic literature exhibits from past ANA conventions. The NBS site also has links to other sites of interest to numismatic bibliophiles, such as the ANA and American Numismatic Society (ANS) web sites, and the Harry W. Bass Numismatic Indexes Project (NIP). The latest fifteen-volume index to *The Asylum* has just been added to NIP.

The web site is a reflection of the society's commitment to serve the needs of numismatic bibliophiles in the computer age. For more information about the NBS web site, contact Wayne Homren at [homren@cgi.com](mailto:homren@cgi.com).

## The Printer's Devil

By Joel J. Orosz, NLG

Your columnist has learned, in the hardest possible way, the perils of using the superlative degree of any adjective, *especially* when referring to numismatic literature. Whenever I have claimed something was the largest, someone has found one bigger; if I have asserted a piece to be the earliest, a critic finds one that was earlier still, if I denounce something as being the worst, a fellow-sufferer finds another that is dismal beyond compare. So I've learned, in years spent as an ink-stained wretch, to qualify my claims with the Godsend word, "known." Hence, the largest known, the earliest known, the worst known. This verbal escape hatch allows for a graceful retreat when the inevitable larger, earlier, or worse example is brought to one's attention. So it was with great humility and even greater trepidation, that your columnist proposes to write about the earliest known American numismatic literature dealer, who issued the first known catalog devoted exclusively to numismatic literature.

Traditionally, numismatic bibliomaniacs have bestowed the title of "first full-time numismatic literature dealer" on Frank Katen. It was in 1946, just after the end of World War II, that Katen entered the profession of coin dealer in New Haven, Connecticut. Over the years, his trade in coins diminished as his commerce in books about coins increased, until by the late 1960s, it was fair to say that Katen was America's first numismatic bibliopole.

Except that Frank Katen himself disclaimed the title. He was the first to point out that Aaron Feldman, the proprietor of "the world's smallest coin shop," and James Brown, a Newark bibliophile, were his contemporaries in the numismatic book trade. Moreover, there was an earlier claimant: William S. Sanders, a carpet and linoleum layer in New Haven, and an issuer of modest lists of numismatic literature. Katen remembers Sanders as having been active when he began his dealership in the immediate post-war era, which recollection is confirmed by a smattering of price lists issued by Sanders which still survive. Clearly, in Sanders, we have a secure titlist as "the first American numismatic bibliopole."

Once again, however, the superlative degree goeth before a fall. In the Money Tree's 23rd Mail-Bid Sale, closing June 24, 1995, lot 693 describes a modest catalog that brings us to a new "first known" American numismatic bibliopole: "Rood, Charles C. (Detroit). CHARLES C. ROOD'S 1ST CATALOG OF NUMISMATIC LITERATURE [1931]." Cataloger Ken Lowe

describes the piece in some detail, and closes by stating "this is an important listing by perhaps America's first dealer in numismatic literature. Rare."

Mr. Rood's 1931 catalog is a tall octavo, stapled, with eight pages if one counts the covers. The front cover is bounded by a red border, with a central vignette of an open book, also in red. Its full title reads: "Charles C. Rood's 1st Catalog of Numismatic Literature: books, periodicals, sale catalogs devoted to coins medals paper money." The catalog is ascribed to "Charles C. Rood, 2164 McClellan Ave., Detroit," and "established 1930" is noted in passing.

Here, it is necessary to make a distinction between coin dealers who sell books and numismatic bibliopoles. Coin dealers who sell books are as old as commercial American numismatics. For example, the M. Thomas & Sons sale of the J.W. Kline collection on June 12-13, 1855, was primarily a coin sale, but also contained 41 lots of numismatic literature. (On page 11 in *Numisgraphics*, Attinelli refers to the owner of this collection as A. C. Kline, but also on page 60, he reveals "A. C. Kline" to be a *nom de numismatique* for John W. Kline.) For more on this early sale, see this column in the Summer, 1993 issue of *The Asylum*. The Chapman Brothers and W. E. Woodward were also wont to sell the literature along with the coins. But these were coin dealers first and foremost, who sold literature as a sideline, not numismatic bibliopoles. Mr. Rood self-consciously decided to become a numismatic bibliopole, and thus becomes the earliest known of that species in America.

Rood's decision came in the midst of a fallow time for American numismatic literature. During the 19th Century, many coin dealers cared deeply about the literature surrounding their chosen profession. Ed Cogan, T. R. Strobridge, the Brothers Chapman, Ed Frossard, and W. E. Woodward were justly famed for producing informative and scholarly catalogs. Henry Chapman, and in particular, Woodward, gathered huge hoards of auction catalogs and other coin literature (see this column for the Fall 1994 issue and the article by John W. Adams in the Winter, 1993 issue). Moreover, during this time period, scholars like Dr. Edward Maris, Sylvester Sage Crosby, and C. Wyllys Betts were actively researching and writing. In the years following World War II, there was a second flowering of information, led by the cataloging of John J. Ford, Jr., and the research of scholars like Walter Breen, William Sheldon, and Eric P. Newman. In between, however, from about 1900 to 1945, lay the Sargasso Sea of American numismatic scholarship. Most of the pioneering giants were gone, and the post-war titans were not yet on the scene, so the stage was left mainly to hucksters like B. Max Mehl and the "just the facts, ma'am" cataloging of Tom Elder and M. H. Bolender.



John W. Adams has written eloquently of this time in his *American Numismatic Literature, Volume 2*:

...special editions and photographic plates—traditions consciously nurtured by Cogan, Woodward and Frossard—gradually disappear. In their place, we get a generation of catalogs designed to sell merchandise and then be discarded rather than to educate and be retained.

This was not a happy time to be a thinking man's coin collector in the United States. There were only two dealers to whom to turn for reliable, in-depth information: Henry Chapman and Wayte Raymond. Chapman had veritable mounds of data, but he rarely shared any except in his own auction catalogs—after all, he was a coin dealer, not a book seller. Wayte Raymond, of course, did publish books, but he was oddly reticent about selling those books. As David T. Alexander points out in his article on Raymond's *Coins of the World*, published in the Spring, 1995 issue of *The Asylum*, Raymond never sought a mass market for his publications, and personally tended to remain aloof from the run-of-the-mill collector.

Charles C. Rood lived the dilemma of the reference-hungry coin collector of the late 1920s. Under the heading of "To the Numismatist, the Collector of Numismatic Literature, Advanced Collector and the Specialist," by which he introduced his catalog, Rood had this to say about his literature-seeking travails:

My decision to engage in the Numismatic Literature business was brought about by my own difficulty in locating material for my personal library. Not one single dealer could be located who had any stock of material of this description. At considerable inconvenience and a lot of corresponding, I was able to locate a volume here and there, or an odd number *The Numismatist* or *Mehl's Monthly* or some other periodical to complete my file, now and then, and am still looking for some of them... "They didn't have any and didn't know of anyone who did have any."

Rood's own coin collecting interests entered upon U. S. and Territorial Gold, Russian, Platinum, and Japanese Gold Obans, and it was the need for finding references on these subjects that brought him to his quest for publications. He concluded, "continued inquiry led me to suspect that there was not one dealer in the country dealing exclusively in 'Coin, Medal and Paper Money Literature,' and further search revealed my suspicions to be a fact which was corroborated by several well-known authorities in a position to know."

So it was Rood set out to be America's first and only numismatic bibliopole. A combination of lucky breaks and diligence brought him to the point of launching his enterprise:

My enthusiasm and determination were encouraged... by the purchase of an entire numismatic library and several accumulations of various sizes, from which I selected my own limited requirements and stocked the balance for disposal. After just one year of searching, advertisement, correspondence, etc., I am now in direct

contact with practically every available source of this literature. It took nearly 2,000 odd numbers of "Numismatist" for me to build one complete file, with the result that I now have the largest stock of back numbers available...

And indeed he did. Rood's first catalog offers issues of *The Numismatist* at the following rates:

1894 to 1899 inclusive at 35 cents per copy or 4 dollars per volume.

1900 to 1910 inclusive at 50 cents per copy or 5 dollars per volume.

1911 to date at 25 cents per copy or 3 dollars per volume.

The numbers between 1900 and 1908 are very scarce and those prior to 1894 extremely so; occasionally, I have the latter and will furnish prices where requested.

The rarity of the pre-1894 issues of *The Numismatist* is something with which no bibliophile will quibble, but the supposed scarcity of the later Heath years causes the latter-day collector to arch an eyebrow. In the third Armand Champa Sale by auctions by Bowers & Merena, Incorporated, cataloger (and former editor of *The Asylum*) Charles Davis states that year sets from 1894 to 1897 (Volumes 7-10) are the most difficult to purchase, since "Volumes 1-6 are readily available in reprint form, and Volumes 11- on becomes more available as the ANA grew and the print run was increased accordingly" (See Lot 2016). To claim, as does Rood, that Volumes 13 through 21 are scarcer than Volumes 7 through 12, and to accordingly charge more for them, strains credulity to the utmost. Could it be that Rood was trying to stretch his profit margin when selling more readily available material?

Rood's list was particularly rich in periodicals. Besides *The Numismatist*, he offered a complete set of the *American Journal of Numismatics*, plus individual numbers (price on application); complete sets of *Numismatic Notes and Monographs* (price on application); the first four volumes plus individual later numbers of Scott and Company's *Coin Collector's Journal* (3 dollars-5 dollars per volume); and a complete set plus individual numbers of Mehl's *Numismatic Monthly* (15 dollars for the set).

The selection of books offered by Rood is not nearly up to the standards set by the journals. Highlighting the listing was a half "Morrocco" (*sic*) *Early Coins of America* at \$25. The rest of the 45 lots offered are rather pedestrian, with ten of them being assorted Scott's Catalogs.

The listing of auction catalogs running from 1859 to date, holds more promise. "Fine stock of these," promises Rood, "priced and unpriced, about three hundred different sales, including those of all famous collections. Fine bindings, marvelous plates, also without plates or bindings." He mentions a few names—including Ten Eyck, Jenks, Granberg and Mills—and says, "lack of space prevents listings or description of the others. Send your list of wants."

Rood's first foray into auction cataloging was something of a mixed bag. Misspellings abounded: "N.W. Dickeson;" "Frank Andrew;" "Parmalee;" "Wassamore." On the other hand, there is an accurate one-page history of *The Numismatist*, which contains a nice appreciation of Dr. George Heath, an entirely appropriate gesture which has curiously evaded Dr. Heath's successors at the American Numismatic Association. For example, examine Volume 100 of *The Numismatist*; to mark the centennial of the journal which Dr. Heath founded and hand-printed for 21 years, the ANA did — nothing. The index to Volume 100 (1987) does not carry even one entry for Dr. Heath!

Charles C. Rood signed off on Page 8 of this inaugural catalog: "America's only 'exclusively numismatic literature' dealer." That was probably true enough in 1931, but for how long was it true? Consulting *American Numismatic Auctions* by *The Asylum's* editor Martin Gengerke, one does not find a listing for Rood's Inaugural Catalog, much less for any successors, nor is Mr. Rood listed in Pete Smith's *American Numismatic Biographies*, nor in the index to Q. David Bowers' *American Numismatic Association Centennial History*. It seems doubtful, therefore, if Mr. Rood was able to secure enough business from his first catalog to ever justify the publication of a second.

Another conundrum remains. Since Rood proclaimed himself to be a collector of numismatic literature, who was selling, in essence his duplicates, he must have possessed (if his claims are, in fact, true) complete runs of *The Numismatist*, the *American Journal of Numismatics*, and Mehl's *Numismatic Monthly*. What became of these delicacies? Charles Davis estimates that there are but ten complete sets of *The Numismatist* (Champa 1, Lot 280), and about twenty sets of *The American Journal of Numismatics* (Champa 2, Lot 1012), in private hands. Consulting Gengerke once again, under the heading of consignors, shows only one entry for "Rood" (without first name or initials): in Tom Elder's Sale of October 9, 1924. This is, of course, before Rood's first numismatic literature catalog was issued, and thus of no help even if the consignor was Charles C. Rood.

Here is another fascinating set of mysteries for N.B.S. members to solve. What became of Charles C. Rood? Did he ever emit another numismatic literature sale? What became of his periodicals and other literature? And, to close the circle, was he really the first "exclusively numismatic literature dealer in America," or was there another, even earlier, numismatic bibliopole?

NOTE: This column was written in 1996. Since then, Pete Smith, in his *Names in Numismatics* column in *The Numismatist*, has carried the story of Rood much further. See "Charles Rood: Early Literature Dealer" in the December, 1997 issue, starting on page 1375.



## The Development of the Coin Album - Part Two

by David W. Lange

In the first installment of this series, I related the early attempts at producing a satisfactory coin album and the ascendancy of Whitman Publishing Company in this field. Its breakthrough product was the 11 x 14 inch coin board. Invented by J. K. Post in 1934, coin boards were printed for him by Whitman, which eventually acquired the rights to this product and expanded the list of available titles.

Coin boards were highly successful from the mid 1930s through the early 1940s, yet they had some drawbacks. The boards were designed to be mounted within a stock picture frame when filled, but until the collection was finished all of the coins remained exposed to the atmosphere. This wasn't much of a problem with worn coins, as they possessed an oxide layer which offered some degree of protection. Uncirculated coins, however, often acquired an image of the owner's fingerprint from his having pushed the coins into their respective openings. Some economical means of covering the coins was needed.

The solution to this problem was found in breaking the single, large board down into a series of smaller boards which overlapped one another to form a closed book. Oral tradition has long credited Whitman staffer Richard Yeo (pen name R. S. Yeoman) with this invention. In fact, the earliest folding boards appeared one year before Whitman's 1940 model. In the absence of contemporary ads, it's impossible to determine which product debuted first, but both the Daniel Stamp Company (DANSCO) and Joseph Oberwise (a manufacturer of premium cards) copyrighted folding boards in 1939.

The greater success and fame of Whitman's competing product resulted from both its more convenient form and that company's superior marketing effectiveness. While the DANSCO and Oberwise folders had but a single fold connecting two panels, the Whitman folders included three overlapping panels. This arrangement was more clever mechanically, and it produced a much smaller and more convenient book when closed. Whitman also seized the advantage by offering a greater line of titles, though DANSCO placed a close second. The Oberwise product, since it was intended solely for coins which were then obtainable from circulation, faced a natural limit to its line of titles. The few other manufacturers of coin boards failed to develop their products any further, and they succumbed to a combination of Whitman's market share and the paper shortage imposed by World War II. By 1944, Oberwise too had abandoned the coin products field, leaving only Whitman and DANSCO for the duration of the war.

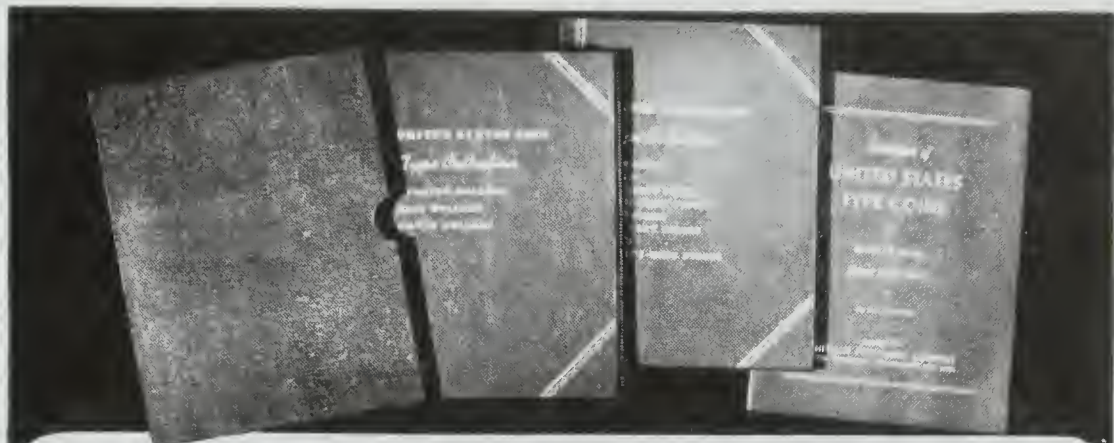
The original Whitman folder of 1940 is remarkably similar to its current descendant in construction and overall appearance, though the newer folders are taller and are made of slimmer cardstock, and their color has deepened from royal blue to navy blue. This product's graphic design has been altered repeatedly over the years, and these variations are distinctive enough that I've identified a total of 12 discernible editions. It's doubtful that the company intended these changes to be noted by collectors, as no mention of them appear in its advertising; it was simply improving its product for both cost effectiveness and greater market share.

The first Whitman folders were evidently marketed late in 1940, and the earliest ads for them appeared the following year. They were priced at 25 cents each, the same cost as its one-piece boards, which remained in production at least as late as 1943. Currently priced at \$2.25 apiece, the cost of these folders is somewhat lower today in terms of fixed dollars, though the materials used for the current line are not quite as sturdy. The first edition included nearly all of the titles then current for Whitman's third edition of boards (Note: the terminology I use of "first edition" and so forth is mine alone and does not reflect any official designation by Whitman). The only titles not carried over from the boards were those for large cents, Peace Dollars and commemorative halves. Titles appearing for the first time as folders were those for silver three-cent pieces, half dimes and Bust Dimes, which to my knowledge were never produced in board form.

The first edition folders were quite elegant in appearance, despite their low-cost materials. Measuring 7-1/2" high by 5-3/4" wide, each had a glossy, royal blue cover with a simulated leather-grain. Titles were printed in silver on the front covers only, not on the spine (this didn't appear until about 1963). Inside, the panels were of sky blue paper, with the date, mint and mintage of each coin printed in black beneath its respective opening. The backing paper was black, and nearly its entire surface was coated in glue, meaning that this potentially corrosive substance was in contact with each coin's reverse. The backing paper included a free-fly endflap which served to protect the last panel of coins from contact with the second and also to provide a surface on which to print a brief description of the coin type on one side and a list of available titles on the other.

All of the Whitman folders through the tenth edition have an ornate border design at the left side of their front covers. On first edition folders this is spaced close to the spine and is accompanied by a very small catalog number, printed in silver using a sans-serif font. The catalog number remains to the present day, though its size, shape and exact location have varied from one edition to another.

Determining the age of a vintage coin folder and thus the cut-off point of each edition is a tricky process. A coin series which was then currently in

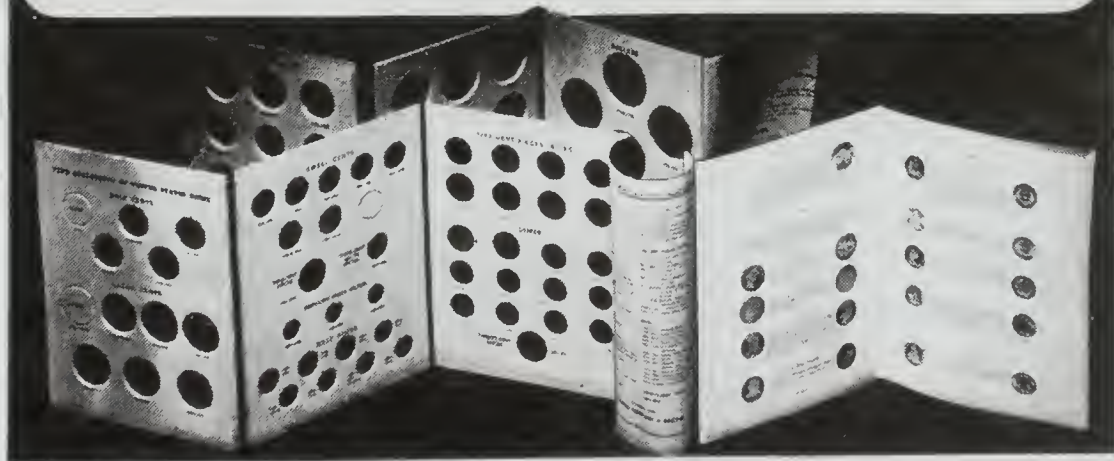


## COLLECT U. S. TYPE COINS

ALL THIS  
FOR ONLY  
**\$1.00**

1. Handbook of U. S. Type Coins
2. Folder for Half Cents, Cents, Two Cent Pieces, and on up to Twenty Cent Pieces
3. Folder for Quarters, Halves and Silver Dollars
4. Slide Case Container

Complete, convenient, compact . . . that's this new Whitman package for coin collectors! The handbook provides a simple outline of U. S. coin types, while the numerous illustrations help you to identify the types and important varieties without guesswork. The two folders will conveniently house your collection, from half cents to silver dollars. In a slide case container . . . all for only \$1.00.



See Your Coin Dealer

**WHITMAN PUBLISHING COMPANY**

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production can be quite helpful, as folders were typically produced during the year following the last printed mintage figures. For example, the Mercury Dime was an ongoing series when the first folders were printed, and one displaying mintage figures through 1941 was almost certainly printed during 1942. Also, the appearance of a new title on a folder's endflap, such as that for Roosevelt Dimes in 1946, dates a folder to no earlier than that year.

Using these criteria, I've determined that what I call first edition folders were printed until about 1943, perhaps succumbing to the wartime paper shortage. The folders printed after that time have covers which are still textured or grained, but do not truly simulate leather. They're also semi-matte, rather than glossy. This finish was used right up through the 1970s, though with a number of subtle color changes. The second edition folders were produced until about 1946. They feature covers exhibiting three slightly different colors, ranging from the original royal blue, to blue-gray, to a light navy blue. It's possible that these variations resulted from the use of multiple printing companies and/or wartime shortages of materials. Second edition folders are marked by a distant left border on their covers, that is to say more distant from the spine, while their catalog numbers are similar in size and style to those of the first edition. The backing paper is either black or a brownish gray.

Folder titles appearing for the first time in the second edition include two for large cents (the boards for this series having been discontinued) and one for silver dollars in general, which included no dates. The Lincoln Cent series was expanded into a second folder, but the cut-off date for the first folder was 1945, not 1940 as in the fourth and subsequent editions. This resulted in a very crowded presentation in the first folder, which was actually weakened by having too many holes! The Washington Quarter series also received a continuation folder beginning with 1946.

The third edition folders produced circa 1946-50 have been the most problematic for me as a collector, since there doesn't seem to be much consistency in their features. Perhaps the lingering wartime shortages affected the availability of matching materials. It's evident when examining these folders that not all of the component parts were printed at the same time, as a trend toward anachronism is clearly seen in the folders I've assigned to this period. Some elements from the second edition were evidently combined with others from the fourth edition, resulting in a number of hybrid folders. Whitman must have printed the various components only as they were needed, assembling them with other pieces from earlier print runs. This makes sense from a business standpoint, as nothing is wasted, but it wreaked havoc with my cataloging efforts until I had enough folders to sort it all out. The most peculiar folders are those which were slow sellers

such as those for half cents and silver three-cent pieces, since these remained in stock the longest before being reprinted.

Some elements are common to the majority of third edition folders. These include a serif style catalog number and a border design placed close to the spine. The covers are most often a light navy blue with a grained finish, but some have the older royal blue or blue-gray covers. Their backing papers are either brownish gray or medium gray. Titles debuting in this edition include those for Roosevelt Dimes and U. S. coins by type. The two type coin folders could be purchased separately at the regular price of 25 cents apiece, but they were also available in a boxed set introduced in 1948 and priced at one dollar. This included the two folders, a monograph on type collecting by R. S. Yeoman and a slipcase to enclose them. All of the components were printed in the familiar color scheme of silver on blue.

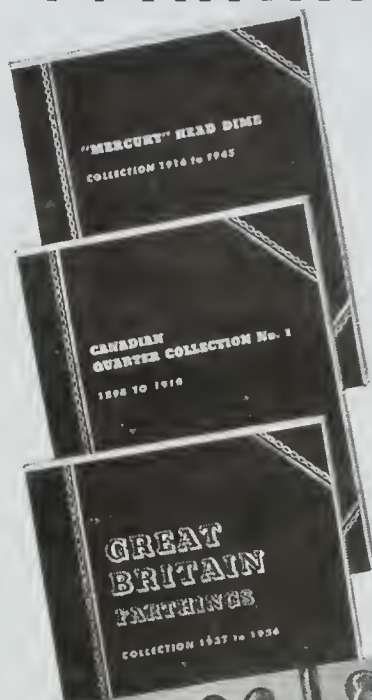
I've dated the fourth edition folders to approximately 1948-53, a period overlapping with that of the third edition and reflecting the unsettled nature of the folders during those years. Fourth edition folders are more easy to assign, however, as their components generally match the following criteria: Matte, navy blue covers with a grained finish, closely placed left borders and small, serif style catalog numbers. Their backing papers are similar in color to those of the third edition.

New titles in this edition include those for all current denominations from cent through half dollar but without printing below the openings. This was an extension of the plain folder for silver dollars, which had evidently been successful. The introduction of the Franklin Half Dollar in 1948 also resulted in a new title. The difficulty of completing the U. S. type set folders was addressed with one for 20th Century types alone. Also added, beginning in 1950, were four titles for Canadian coins. Current issues were common in the border states, and Whitman repounded with folders for large cents, small cents, nickel five-cent pieces and silver five-cent pieces. The hobby was growing rapidly during the late 1940s and early 1950s, and none of the existing titles had yet been dropped.

Fifth edition folders were introduced in 1953 and corresponded to Whitman's first price increase from 25 to 35 cents. This edition became perhaps the most widely produced of all in terms of sheer numbers, as it ran until about 1959 and witnessed a tremendous period of growth in the hobby. Unused examples of fifth edition folders are still common in dealers' stocks and may include titles now quite obscure, such as the folder for silver three-cent pieces. Never a good seller, it was discontinued sometime after the sixth edition, though lingering in Whitman's list of titles for years afterward.

Fifth edition folders have covers identical to those in the fourth edition, though their ornate border is distant from the spine and they're known

# Whitman Coin Folders



**51 for U.S. Coins**

**24 for Canadian Coins**

**18 for British Coins**

**5 for Mexican Coins**

*All coins are visible*



**35¢ each**

*...all at one time!*

Whitman 35 cent coin folders are the most economical way to protect and classify a coin collection. The folders open flat, and all coins can be viewed at one time. When closed, they are book-size for convenient storing. Each folder includes a page of information.

**WHITMAN PUBLISHING COMPANY, Racine, Wis.  
WORLD'S LEADING NUMISMATIC PUBLISHERS**





only in navy blue. Their catalog numbers are of a serif style font and are either narrow or broad, the latter evidently printed at a later date. All have medium gray backing papers, the color used henceforth through the eleventh edition. The fifth edition is the last in which the endflaps do not include a line drawing of the coin type (though the foreign titles continued to be unillustrated in later editions).

The list of titles was expanded dramatically during these years. New ones include a two-part series for Liberty Seated Quarters and a four-part series for Liberty Seated Half Dollars. The Canadian line saw the greatest growth, and all denominations from 1858 to date could now be collected in their entirety. A folder was produced for complete date sets of the bronze coins of the Maritime provinces, as well, though it was evidently a poor seller and was discontinued after the early 1960s.

The sixth edition debuted around 1957 and experienced some overlap with the fifth edition as the likely result of leftover component parts. The most readily identifiable feature of sixth edition folders is the presence of a line drawing of each particular coin type which appears on the endflap. Though this illustration was continued on all subsequent editions, only in this one did it appear in combination with an untitled spine. The folders for world coins lack illustrations, though they can be dated through other means, such as the listing of available titles. Sixth edition folders have navy blue covers, as do all subsequent Whitman folders to date, aside from the some of the custom orders printed by the company for other distributors.

A number of changes occurred during the sixth edition's run. The first of these was the elimination of glue within the openings in the cardboard panels. Perhaps responding to complaints from collectors, Whitman devised a method of affixing the backing papers to the panels in such a way that the glue was placed only between the openings and thus did not come into contact with the coins. This change was effected around 1959, and both versions can be collected for most titles within the sixth edition. Another subtle but quite collectable change was the resequencing of date and mint listings within each folder. Until about 1961, the openings were sequenced by mint as P, S and D. After 1961, the arrangement familiar today was adopted, the openings being sequenced as P, D and S. As with the glued and unglued openings, most titles within the sixth edition are available in either printing sequence. Some titles which are common in one format are quite rare in the other. A complete listing of the varieties known to me may be found in the catalog which follows this narrative.

Produced until 1963, the sixth edition folders represent the apex of both coin collecting as a popular hobby and Whitman's line of hobby products. Though other titles were added in later editions, this occurred only after many less successful ones had been dropped, and the sixth edition offers

the most expansive list of titles for the collector of coin folders. In the U. S. series, the new titles included a "ONE-A-YEAR" folder for cents from 1909 to date, nickels from 1913, dimes from 1916 and quarters from 1916. With coin collecting having become so widespread, the chances of completing all dates and mints were now quite small, and the single opening per date concept sought to address this shrinking availability. Silver dollars were now collectable by date and mint, as Whitman introduced a four-part series for Morgans and a single folder for Peace Dollars. A type set folder for Canadian coins was new in the sixth edition, as were both a type folder and a complete line of date and mint folders for Newfoundland. The modern coinage of Great Britain was added beginning in 1961. Folders for collecting farthings through shillings by date were available, though the six pence and shilling folders only went back to 1902. Date set folders for Mexican one-centavo and five-centavo pieces were introduced in 1963, but these were evidently unsuccessful and were quickly dropped from the line. Some series, both U. S. and Canadian, which were then ongoing were supplemented with new folders to accommodate additional coins. For example, the Jefferson Nickel folder was terminated at 1961 and a second one added for coins dating 1962 and later.

The seventh edition was short-lived, lasting only from 1963 to 1964, and it's likely that only the few titles I've already encountered were actually printed. On the listing which follows this narrative, I've included most of the titles then current, but readers will note that only a few of them have been confirmed as actually existing in this edition. The folders of the seventh edition are absolutely identical to those in the sixth, save for the addition of their titles repeated on the spine in silver letters. These folders are readily distinguished from later ones, all of which have printed spines, by the absence of any Whitman logo on the seventh edition folders.

A new folder was added for the collecting of Lincoln Memorial Cents from 1959 onward. The only other new U. S. title for this edition was prompted by the introduction of the Kennedy Half Dollar in 1964. One folder each for British Commonwealth coins of the farthing, halfpenny and penny size are listed for this edition, but I've only seen these in later editions. Using existing panels holed for one series to cover another by simply printing a different cover is a bit of economy practiced by both Whitman and its competitors to the present day.

The eighth edition was identical to the seventh, with one exception: The name "Whitman" was added near the bottom of each folder's cover. Lasting only from 1964 to 1965, this is another edition which is notable for rarities. Again, I've listed most of the possible titles in the catalog which follows, but many remain unconfirmed. Slow-moving titles such as those for two-cent and three-cent pieces, Bust Dimes, and so on were probably

not printed after the sixth edition, but these old folders were still listed as part of the line for many years afterward. When they turn up today, they're often as not in unused condition. Date collection folders for Australian halfpennies through crowns were added beginning in 1965, but these were evidently poor sellers and didn't last long.

One of the most peculiar items in the Whitman line of folders appeared in this edition. Called a "COIN SIZE TESTING CHART," this folder included openings of various sizes which corresponded to the sizes available in Whitman's new line of snap-together, polystyrene holders for single coins. Each opening was marked with the denomination that it fitted and the catalog number of the corresponding plastic holder. Collectors could test a coin's size by placing it in the opening which fit best and would thus know in advance which plastic holder to use. Two versions of this testing folder were produced, one in the conventional format of Whitman folders and one which was exactly half as tall.

When the ninth edition folders appeared in 1965, the coin hobby was falling on hard times. The collapse of the market in uncirculated rolls, combined with the rapid disappearance of older coins, caused many of the newly acquired collectors to drift away. The sales of coin folders slumped dramatically and, with just a few exceptions, most titles in this edition are scarce and many are entirely unknown.

The ninth edition lasted until 1967 and is distinguished by three features. In place of the "Whitman" logo on their covers, ninth edition folders bear a small eagle logo, a line drawing of the coin type and the small figures 35, indicating their price. The ninth edition represents the Whitman folder at the very apex of quality. Attractive graphics, combined with superior construction and cleanly cut holes, make these the most pleasing of all the various editions. By this time, Whitman had worked out most of the problems with the earlier folders, yet the quality of the materials being used was equal to that with which the folders were launched in 1940. Later folders, particularly those produced in the past 20 years, simply lack the strength and precision cutting of these vintage items.

Though still listed at this time, a number of unpopular titles had probably been dropped from production. These include half cents, large cents, two-cent and three-cent pieces, Shield Nickels, half dimes, Bust Dimes and Liberty Seated Quarters. Other slow sellers were apparently reprinted in this edition only as needed. An example is part three of the Liberty Seated Half Dollar series, the only one known in this edition of the four which comprised the complete collection. No foreign titles are known in this edition. Enough examples of the earlier editions may have been on hand at the time to meet demand, as some foreign titles did reappear in later editions. It was around this time that Whitman became a division of Western



Publishing, and this new relationship probably accounts for the change in logo which appeared with the tenth edition. The eagle logo was replaced by a large, stylized globe encasing the name Whitman. The small line drawing of the coin type continued, though the price was now elevated to read 39. New with this edition was a feature which reflected the rapid disappearance of silver coins and all older designs. A rating system was applied to each title: A solid star printed in silver at the upper right corner of the cover indicated a "Basic" collection, one which was relatively easy to complete. "Secondary" collections were designated with a skeletal star, while "Advanced" titles bore no star.

The tenth edition was extremely short-lived. All the ones I've seen were evidently printed in 1967 or very early in 1968. Coming as it did during a slump in the coin market, the abortive tenth edition has proved to be the rarest overall, with the possible exception of the first. Only half a dozen titles are known to me, all of them for the more recent series which were most likely to be in print at any given time. Unworn examples have proved impossible to find, as all of the folders printed were probably sold to retail customers and put to use. There were no new titles, and none were printed for foreign series.

1968 ushered in the eleventh edition with a greatly revised series of folders. Existing titles had always borne their original copyright date, regardless of edition, but these were now updated to read 1968. Western Publishing was now clearly indicated as the producer of these folders. The Whitman globe logo was retained on their covers, but its size was reduced substantially. The small coin illustration was continued on each folder for U. S. coins, as was the line drawing which had appeared on the endflap since the sixth edition. Foreign titles continued without illustrations in either place, and a few of the U. S. titles lacked cover illustrations. The blue-gray backing paper of the earlier entries in this edition was replaced by a very dark, navy blue backing during the 1970s, and transitional folders exist for many titles.

An innovative feature of the eleventh edition, one prompted by customer complaints regarding the earlier folders, was the new "snap-loc" style of hole cut into each folder. Plain-edge coins, such as cents and nickels, tended to fall out of their holes in the earlier editions, particularly when the coins were worn. The new style of hole was slightly beveled inward, so that while it was difficult to get a coin into the hole initially, it was unlikely that the coin would fall out later. This feature has been retained in all subsequent editions.

The eleventh edition lasted more than ten years, and most titles are fairly plentiful today. The exceptions are the two folders for Barber Half Dollars,

which were discontinued early in this edition. Several subtle variations occurred over the life of this edition, and I've attempted to reconstruct their chronology. The earliest folders have the trademark symbol "T.M." in tiny letters near the logo on the cover and a price marked "39" (1968-70). The T.M. was then replaced by a letter "R" for registered, though the price 39 was retained (1970). Finally, the price indication was dropped after about 1971, as inflation prompted a series of price increase throughout the decade. Another code which appeared in the upper right corner of the cover adjacent to the rating star consisted of one of several geometric symbols such as a square or a delta. These symbols may have indicated different printers or different materials, but the folders appear otherwise identical. Attempting to collect all of these various combinations for each title would be a maddening process. While I've retained some examples of each, I've only listed the basic titles in my catalog.

Several anachronistic entries appeared in this edition, including the "ONE-A-YEAR" folders for nickels and for quarters. Though they bear the older "Whitman logo" on their covers, all of their other components indicate that they date from the early 1970s. This may have been another example of using up older components to fill a specific order, as the other "ONE-A-YEAR" titles are known only in the sixth and seventh editions. Curiously, part two of the large cent collection reappeared in the eleventh edition and was probably made to order. The only new title in this edition was prompted by the introduction of the Eisenhower Dollar in 1971. All of the Canadian titles seem to have remained current, though not all have been confirmed. The line of British titles had been discontinued, though a couple are known in this edition, probably printed to order. Also long gone by this time were all titles for the Maritime provinces, Mexico and Australia.

The discontinuation of the various British titles prompted a custom order from the Don Hirschorn Company early in the eleventh edition period. Folders were printed for each of the old pre-decimal British series in the conventional Whitman format and color scheme. These folders were identical to regular Whitman folders, though they bore a unique series of catalog numbers beginning with numeral 8. Distributed only by Hirschorn in limited numbers, these are quite rare today. Only the undated folder for six pence pieces has been seen by me.

Though Whitman folders have been printed with navy blue covers since the early 1950s, this shade of blue gradually darkened over the years, something not evident until old and new folders are compared side by side. The darkest shade is the current one, introduced with the greatly revised twelfth edition. In production since 1978, the twelfth edition is thus the longest-

running one of all. These folders feature a very large photographic illustration on their covers in place of the small line drawing used previously, but they retain the small globe logo familiar from earlier editions. Their titles are now printed in mixed capital and lower-case letters, while previous editions were usually titled all in capitals. Early entries in the twelfth edition have the familiar medium gray backing paper, but ones produced more recently have backing paper which is charcoal gray. For the first 15 years or so of the twelfth edition, these folders were of the traditional Whitman size, unchanged since 1940. In recent years, however, newly printed folders have been about a quarter inch taller. As with the subtle color changes, this feature is only detectable when the old and new folders are placed side by side.

Aside from the necessary supplemental folders for our current, long-running series of coins, the only new titles has been that for the combined collection of Eisenhower/Anthony Dollars, as well as various speciality folders to mark Whitman anniversaries or ones custom printed for other distributors. Dropped early in this edition were the folders for Barber Dimes and Quarters, as well as those for Morgan and Peace Dollars. The folders for Walking Liberty Half Dollars are printed only as needed and are frequently not available. All regular production of Canadian series folders was dropped after the eleventh edition, but Whitman currently produces folders for Canadian small cents and nickels under the "Star" brand for dealer Virg Marshall III, and these may be collected as part of the twelfth edition.

With so many older titles having been dropped, Whitman has begun to reuse their catalog numbers when adding supplemental folders for ongoing series. For example, when the first folder for Roosevelt Dimes was terminated at 1964, the second installment from 1965 to date was assigned number 9034, previously held by part two of the Liberty Seated Quarter collection.

The "One-A-Year" series was briefly revived for this edition, though I've confirmed only the folder for dimes. That for quarters was updated so that it commenced with 1932 instead of 1916. The long-running series of Washington Quarters appears in three distinctive versions within the twelfth edition. In earlier editions, this collection had been broken down as follows: 1932-45, 1946-59 and 1960 to date. In order to provide a folder for the clad issues alone, the second part was now extended through 1964 and the third then commenced with 1965. This breakdown proved impractical, and the first two parts were then realigned to cover the years 1932-47 and 1948-64, respectively. When the revised third folder was filled, it was cut off at 1987 and a fourth was added which commences with 1988. All of these



breakdowns may be collected within the twelfth edition, as seen in my accompanying catalog.

The twelfth edition is rich in custom orders printed by Whitman for other distributors and collectable as part of the Whitman series. Krause Publications has ordered customized folders for its five-year anniversaries since 1982, these typically included a date and mint collection of Lincoln Memorial Cents, as well as a commemorative medal in one or two base metals. Since 1991, the U. S. Mint has commissioned folders for cents 1959 to date and nickels 1962 to date. These attractive folders are printed in green, and their covers bear a large Treasury seal in silver. All of these custom orders make no reference to Whitman Coin Products or Western Publishing, Inc., but the materials and assembly are unmistakably Whitman's.

Recognizing the heritage that it possessed in its long line of coin folders, Whitman produced a miniature folder in 1990 commemorating the 50th anniversary of its product. This souvenir included just one opening in each of its three panels, these to be filled with cents dated 1940, 1965 and 1990, respectively. Handed out at the 1990 ANA convention in Seattle, they proved quite popular with visitors. In a similar vein, Whitman produced a miniature, two-panel folder in 1996 to mark the 50th anniversary edition of *A Guide Book of United States Coins*, by R. S. Yeoman. Each panel was cut to hold dimes dated 1946 and 1996, respectively. These were distributed at the 1996 ANA convention in Denver. While the first ones given away actually included the two coins, these ran out quickly, and many persons received only the folder. While strictly speaking it marks the anniversary of a book, this neat little item is still quite collectable for the coin folder enthusiast.

This is quite a challenging collection to assemble, though currently not an expensive one. The greatest costs seem to be in shipping and telephone bills. It's difficult for most dealers to quickly distinguish the various editions, and I end up with numerous duplicates that are less costly to keep than to return.

What follows is a complete listing by editions of all the various titles I believe to have been printed or are likely to have been printed. Those which I've confirmed to exist through firsthand observation are indicated with a plus (+) sign. The titles are written exactly as they appear on the front cover of each folder, including italics and both upper case and lower case lettering. For those editions which bear duplicate titles on the spine, these titles were often abbreviated from the one on the cover. Only the cover titles are reproduced in this catalog.

*to be continued...*

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